

REMARKS

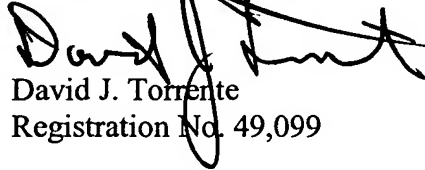
Claims 1-16 are present in the instant application, in the most recent Office Action, claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,655,631 to Austen-Brown ("Austen-Brown"). Claims 1-6 and 8-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over Austen-Brown in view of various other references. Claim 6 is objected to for lack of proper dependency. As amended above, claim 6 depends from claim 1, as presumed by the Examiner for the sake of examination. Withdrawal of the objection is kindly requested.

On the merits of the claims, Applicant respectfully traverses all rejections on the grounds that Austen-Brown is not prior art to the present application. Attached to this response is a declaration of the inventor pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 attesting to a date of invention before the provisional filing date of Austen-Brown, i.e., before 26 July 2001. That declaration is supported by an exhibit consisting of a written disclosure of the invention declaration dated prior to 26 July 2001. Dates and certain personal contact information have been redacted in preparing the exhibit.

Therefore, in light of this evidence, Applicant respectfully submits that Austen-Brown is not effective as a reference in the present application, and that any rejections relying upon Austen-Brown have been obviated. Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections is kindly requested.

Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims recite patentable subject matter, and kindly requests an early and favorable indication of allowability. If the Examiner has any reservation in allowing the claims, and believes that a telephone interview would advance prosecution, she is kindly requested to telephone the undersigned at her earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,



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